

# DOWNTOWN SIGN STANDARDS

SIGN REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO  
DOWNTOWN PRECISE PLANS  
SECTION A36.38.060.D

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# DOWNTOWN PRECISE PLAN SIGN GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

The City envisions Castro Street as the functional and symbolic center of the community that has an active and attractive pedestrian environment. Signs reflect the overall image and success of a business and can contribute color, variety and detail to the character of a downtown area making it a vibrant public place. Signs in the downtown area should have pedestrian orientation and scale, artistic quality and unique creative design that reflects the individual character of the business. The following are general guidelines for the Downtown area which, along with specific recommendations made by the Development Review Committee, should be followed in designing and constructing a new sign.

## SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

All new signs, or change of copy on existing signs, must be approved by the City. Required application materials include the Application for Development Review, a site plan showing the location of the sign, and elevation drawings showing the proposed size, materials, and color. The elevations must also show the context of the proposed location (i.e., either free-standing in a landscaped area or wall-mounted on a structure). Three copies of each drawing are required. The fee for review of new signs, or change of copy on existing signs, is as listed on the City of Mountain View Community Development Department Fee Schedule.

Signs for tenant spaces in multi-tenant structures or multiple structures on one site may be subject to the standards of a "sign program." A sign program is a coordinated plan for integrating multiple signs on a building or site in a compatible manner. If a sign program exists, the standards must be listed on the drawings. If a sign program does not exist, one may be required.

## REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

All signs which conform with these guidelines, and/or to a previously approved sign program and are of acceptable design and materials may be approved over-the-counter.

All signs where compliance with these guidelines or any applicable sign program cannot be readily determined, although the design and materials of the sign comply with these guidelines, may be approved administratively.

All sign programs, and all signs which conform with the Downtown Precise Plan Sign Guidelines and/or to a previously approved sign program, but may not

comply with these guidelines may be reviewed by the Development Review Committee.

## **OBTAINING BUILDING PERMITS**

Signs mounted on buildings, illuminated or not, shall have building permits. Free-standing monument and directional signs also require building permits. When signs are illuminated an electrical permit is also necessary.

Two sets of plans are required for a sign permit. These two sets shall have been pre-approved by the Planning Division. The plans shall include a site plan identifying the location of the building and the signage, a dimensioned drawing of the sign and its construction details. The construction details shall include the number and type of anchorage devices and, if illumination is present, shall show the location of the disconnect and any related electrical equipment to be installed.

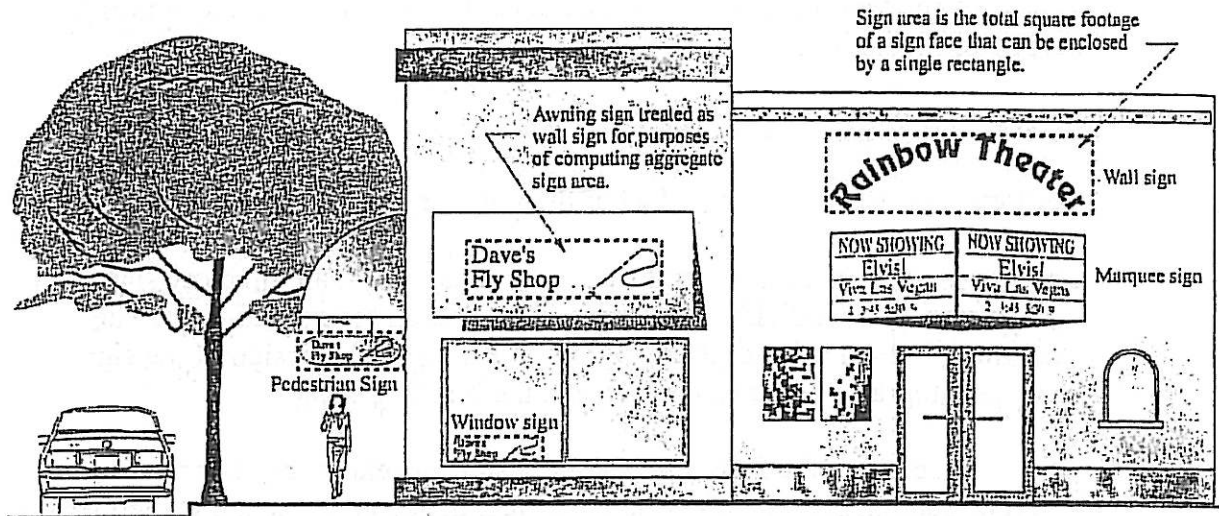
In order to obtain a permit, the contractor is required to have a City of Mountain View business license and show proof of workers compensation insurance. Permits are generally issued over the counter once Planning Division approval is obtained.

## **PERMITTED SIGNS-PERMANENT**

### **PRIMARY OCCUPANCY SIGNS**

The primary sign is the main sign used to identify a business. A primary sign is any sign painted on or attached parallel to the face of the building including individually mounted letters, painted signs, awning signs and neon signs.

1. One primary sign for each storefront or building façade that fronts a public street or alley is permitted. The primary sign shall not exceed 1 square foot per 1 foot of frontage, subject to meeting other sign design criteria.
2. The design of the primary sign shall be integrated with and compliment the overall design of the façade. The location of the sign shall be centered above the storefront and below the second floor windows.
3. On side streets perpendicular to Castro Street, the primary sign may be a projecting sign or awning sign to enhance visibility from Castro Street.



### PEDESTRIAN SIGNS

Pedestrian signs are small signs, typically projecting signs supported by a decorative bracket, which are located above the storefront entry and are oriented to the pedestrian.

1. One pedestrian sign for each storefront is permitted. The pedestrian sign shall be no larger than 2 feet by 3 feet, subject to meeting the other design criteria.
2. The bottom of pedestrian signs shall be located at least 8 feet above the sidewalk, and be rigidly supported.
3. The pedestrian sign shall be supported by decorative chain or bracket, designed and constructed with a high level of craftsmanship and detail. Creative signs that "symbolize" the business are encouraged.

### MONUMENT SIGNS

Monument signs are free-standing signs located adjacent to the sidewalk independent of the building.

1. When a building's front entrance is set back at least 15 feet from the street, a free-standing monument sign is permitted in addition to the primary and pedestrian signs. The monument sign can have a maximum height of 6 feet with an area no larger than 30 square feet per sign face, subject to meeting other design criteria.

2. A monument sign shall be set onto a base or frame, presenting a solid, attractive and well-proportioned appearance that complements the building design and materials.

#### DIRECTORY AND UPPER FLOOR SIGNS

A directory sign lists the tenants of a building on one sign.

1. For two or more story multiple-tenant buildings, one small directory sign with nameplates of the individual tenants is permitted on the ground floor. The maximum letter height for tenant names is 2 inches. The design of the sign shall be integrated with and compliment the building design.
2. Where a second or third story tenant has a separate entry door on the street, a small projecting pedestrian sign is permitted, in keeping with the guidelines for pedestrian signs. Such signs shall be placed near the tenant street entry.
3. Commercial uses on second floor of multiple story buildings that do not have ground floor occupancy may have window signs in addition to otherwise permitted building-mounted or free-standing signs. One window sign is permitted per framed window area and cannot exceed 15% of the total second floor glass area. Window signs above the second floor are not permitted. The maximum letter height for window signs is 12 inches. Second floor window signs shall be non-illuminated, and shall consist of paint, gold-leaf or similar high-quality graphic material on the glass surface.
4. Window signs above the second floor are not allowed.

#### WINDOW SIGNS

Window signs are any signs placed within a window facing the street.

1. One window sign is permitted per window pane or framed window area on the ground floor. Window signage shall not cover more than 25% of the window area, excluding the area of any glass doors, or one square foot per one foot of frontage, whichever is less.
2. The maximum letter height for window signs is 12 inches.
3. Interior window and door signage shall be professionally designed and constructed. Signs made of gold leaf and other high-quality graphic material that compliment the storefront display is permitted.



4. Neon signs within four feet of a window may be permitted provided that:
  - All electrical supply cords and conduits and electrical transformers are hidden from view through the window; and
  - All necessary permits, including electrical and/or building permits, have been obtained.
5. Except as otherwise permitted, paper, cardboard, plastic, chalk- or white-board signs are prohibited.
6. Any graphics, displays, or sign panels with lettering more than one inch high, mounted within four feet of a window shall be considered a window sign. There are three exceptions:
  - Displays with lettering less than one inch high;
  - Products on shelves for sale to the public; and
  - Framed information panels with 80% of the area of text in lettering less than one inch high.

#### **SPECIAL SIGNAGE**

Special signage are additional artistic signs that identify the business and convey a message through the use of a pictorial or graphic image, and may include a limited amount of wording that is clearly secondary to the artistic quality of the sign.

#### **FLAGS**

1. Customized graphic flags not exceeding 6 feet by 10 feet that convey a message through the use of a pictorial or graphic image and which compliment the building design are permitted. The lowest point of the flag must be at least 8 feet above the surface of the sidewalk or pedestrian way.
2. Customized flags should be mounted on a decorative bracket attached perpendicular to the building face.

#### **TROMPE L'OEIL**

1. Life-size trompe l'oeil art painted on the wall surface of a building may be permitted upon approval from the Zoning Administrator to ensure the artwork complements the design of the building in color, shape and location on the building.

### MENU HOLDERS

1. A free-standing menu holder is permitted on the exterior storefront of a restaurant.
2. The menu holder shall be limited to the size of two pages of the menu utilized by the establishment.
3. Lettering shall not exceed one inch in height.
4. A menu holder shall be located so as not to cause a safety hazard to pedestrians.
5. The menu holder shall not be used for additional business identification or additional signage.

### OFF-SITE SIGNS

1. Off-site painted directory signs on buildings at intersections that direct pedestrians to businesses down side streets and/or alleys are permitted with the permission of the building owner.
2. Signs shall be professionally designed and constructed and must complement the color and materials of the building on which they are painted.

### SIDEWALK CAFÉ SIGNAGE

1. A sidewalk café signage on the café umbrella(s) in addition to the main occupancy frontage signs may be permitted. Signage is limited to the name of the café business. The maximum letter height is 6 inches and the business logo shall not exceed 1 square foot in area.
2. The total signage on an umbrella shall not exceed 10% of the area of the umbrella.
3. Generic advertising, such as a product name is not allowed.
4. Sidewalk Café signs must be as approved in the Sidewalk Café License.

## **PERMITTED SIGNS - TEMPORARY**

### **GRAND OPENING BANNER**

1. Banners advertising a new business opening are permitted for a maximum of 30 days.
2. The banner shall include a date visibly noted on the sign and be removed within 30 days of the posted date..
3. No other type of temporary banners is permitted.

### **CIVIC EVENT SIGN ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**

1. A single designated area not exceeding 6 square feet of a single window of an occupancy may be approved to allow display of a maximum of 2 ancillary, temporary, professionally prepared posters announcing an event of general public interest in addition to any permanent signs allowed.
2. Such signage does not require individual City approval, but shall be dated on the sign and shall be removed within 30 days of the posted date or upon conclusion of the event, whichever ends first.

### **CONSTRUCTION SIGNS**

1. One temporary sign, advertising the various construction trades participating in the project is allowed.
2. On a site less than one acre, the sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign area or 6 feet in height.
3. On a parcel of land greater than one acre, the sign shall not exceed 50 square feet in sign area or 10 feet in height. The sign shall not extend beyond the subject property nor interfere with any traffic safety visibility area of the parcel.
4. The sign shall be unlighted.
5. The sign may remain on the property until the last unit is sold, rented or leased or for one year, whichever period is less, unless the extension has been granted by the Zoning Administrator.

### REAL ESTATE SIGNS

1. No more than one real estate sign per occupancy frontage shall be permitted until a project or tenant space is leased or sold.
2. Maximum sign area per sign is 9 square feet, and shall be located flat against the building wall or within a window, and shall not project above the eave line.
3. The sign shall be unlighted.
4. Vacant lots may mount the sign on a free-standing monument, located outside of any sight visibility area as no portion of the sign extends across the property line.

### SIGNS NOT PERMITTED

1. Rooftop signs, cabinet signs, readerboard signs, banners (except for grand opening and civic event signs), balloons, flashing signs, billboards, "A"- frame signs, plastic flags, whiteboards, chalkboards and blackboards are prohibited.
2. Any exterior sign advertising or publicizing an activity, service or product not conducted on the premises upon which the sign is maintained, except for public events and as otherwise allowed by the guidelines.

### NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

1. When a business with a nonconforming sign is replaced with a new business, the nonconforming sign shall be removed and replaced with a conforming sign.
2. An existing business may replace the sign panels in an existing non-conforming cabinet sign. However, when the business is sold or replaced by a new business, the non-conforming cabinet sign must be removed and replaced with a sign conforming to the regulations.

### SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

1. All permanent signs shall be professionally constructed of high-quality, durable material.
2. Sign switches conduits and panel boxes shall be concealed from view.
3. Signs shall be designed to be vandal and weather resistant.

4. Signs shall be properly maintained so that they are in proper working order and do not endanger public safety.
5. When a sign is removed due to replacement or termination of the lease, the tenant or owner shall fill and paint any holes caused by the removal of the sign.